



## Staying healthy for the holidays



### Holiday Stress and Depression

The holiday season which begins for most of us with Thanksgiving and continues through New Year's Day, can bring -- stress and depression. Many things can add to the "holiday blues": stress, fatigue, money, and missing your family or friends. Some people suffer other stress responses such as headaches, excessive drinking, over-eating and difficulty sleeping. Even more people experience post-holiday let down after January 1.

If you experience stress or depression that impacts your day to day activities talk with your doctor.

#### Symptoms of Depression

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed
- Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"

- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide or suicide attempts
- Restlessness, irritability

If you experience five or more of these symptoms every day for two weeks, talk with doctor – you may be suffering from depression.

#### To cut back on holiday stress:

- Take breaks from group activities
- Go for walks when you can
- Keep a regular sleep, meal, and exercise schedule
- Manage your priorities and commitments
- Set a reasonable alcohol limit
- Get plenty of rest

Holiday stress sometimes can trigger depression. If you feel depressed, talk to your doctor about ways to get help. Getting treatment is important for your overall health.